

§ 72.15

(d) the consular officer may decide in his or her discretion to discard toiletries and perishable items.

§ 72.15 Action when possession is impractical.

(a) A consular officer should not take physical possession of the personal estate of a deceased United States citizen or non-citizen national in his or her consular district when the consular officer determines in his or her discretion that it would be impractical to do so.

(b) In such cases, the consular officer must take action that he or she determines in his or her discretion would be appropriate to protect the personal estate such as:

(1) Requesting the persons, officials or organizations having custody of the personal estate to ship the property to the consular officer, if the personal estate contains sufficient funds to cover the costs of such shipment; or

(2) Requesting local authorities to safeguard the property until a legal representative can take physical possession.

§ 72.16 Procedure for inventorying and appraising effects.

(a) After taking physical possession of the personal estate of a deceased United States citizen or non-citizen national, the consular officer should promptly inventory the personal effects.

(b) If the personal estate taken into physical possession includes apparently valuable items, the consular officer may, in his or her discretion, seek a professional appraisal for such items, but only to the extent that there are funds available in the estate or from other sources (such as the next of kin) to cover the cost of appraisal.

(c) The consular officer must also prepare a list of articles not taken into physical possession, with an indication of any measures taken by the consular office to safeguard such items for submission with the inventory of effects.

§ 72.17 Final statement of account.

The consular officer may have to account directly to the parties in interest and to the courts of law in estate matters. Consequently, the officer must

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keep an account of receipts and expenditures for the personal estate of the deceased, and must prepare a final statement of account when turning over the estate to the legal representative, a claimant, or the Department.

§ 72.18 Payment of debts owed by decedent.

The consular officer may pay debts of the decedent which the consular officer believes in his or her discretion are legitimately owed in the country in which the death occurred, or in the country in which the decedent was residing at the time of death, including expenses incident to the disposition of the remains and the personal effects, out of the convertible assets of the personal estate taken into possession by the consular officer.

§ 72.19 Consular officer is ordinarily not to act as administrator of estate.

(a) A consular officer is not authorized to accept appointment from any foreign state or from a court in the United States and/or to act as administrator or to assist (except as provided in §§ 72.8 to 72.30) in administration of the personal estate of a United States citizen or non-citizen national who has died, or was residing at the time of death, in his or her consular district, unless the Department has expressly authorized the appointment. The Department will authorize such an appointment only in exceptional circumstances and will require the consular officer to execute bond consistent with 22 U.S.C. 4198 and 4199.

(b) The Department will not authorize a consular officer to serve as an administrator unless:

(1) Exercise of such responsibilities is:

(i) Authorized by treaty provisions or permitted by the laws or authorities of the country where the United States citizen or national died or was domiciled at the time of death; or

(ii) Permitted by established usage in that country; and

(2) The decedent does not have a legal representative in the consular district.